PS 3505
.L24 W5
1902
Copy 1

When Bards sing out of tune

A. Clark

Class PS3505
Book .L24W5
Copyright No. 1902

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

WHEN BARDS SING OUT OF TUNE

BY

A. CLARK

THE LIBRARY
OF CONGRESS

THE

Abbey Press

PUBLISHERS

114

FIFTH AVENUE

London NEW YORK Montreal

L1962

PS 3505
.L24 W5
1902

THE LIBRARY OF
CONGRESS,
TWO COPIES RECEIVED
APR. 7 1902
COPYRIGHT ENTRY
apr. 7-1902
CLASS a XXc No.
30434
COPY B.

Copyright, 1902,

by

THE

Abbey Press

PREFACE.

"And I had done a hellish thing."

COLERIDGE.

DISGUST and other things led me to write and to publish this satire. If I have spoken rudely of any person or persons it has not been without cause. As to the critics, I have stated the truth. I have as much right to put Mark Twain in satire as he has to put the religion of my friends into ridicule.

I may incur the charge of jealousy for writing a satire which has for its mark the greatest geniuses (so-called) of the age, but such was not the cause, as I never had any particular thirst for literary distinction, and what I have written has been more of a task than a pleasure, both to myself and friends. If I ever had any ambition, it was for another art entirely or for wealth, and I certainly do not envy talented actors who have raised the dramatic art to the very

summit of perfection, nor do I envy J. P. Morgan, but rather admire him as the greatest genius of the times in any line except the stage, and possibly invention. I admire any man of genius, but loath to see a Romulus Augustus on the throne of a Trajan.

I studied poetry and other literature in school, and though my standing was low in my class learned something of the merits of writing, and therefore claim the right to give my opinion of the petty scribblers who infest the world to-day, although I claim no ability in the writing of verse, and this was written with no attempt to display any imagined talent. The reason that all species of writers have been included under the one name, "bards," is that they all dabble in verse. There may be some authors admirers of such, and publishers who will object to this protest, but I venture to say that in this I merely act as spokesman (self-constituted of course) for the world at large.

I offer no apology for what has been hinted at either in the political, religious, or "intellectual" world. Brains are mud. No one knows anything, no one ever did know anything, and the prospects with the present

school of thought are not over propitious to the hope that we will know something some day. Why not then develop art or give people a smile on earth (this is our realm now and the most worthless and vain people in it are those who pass their lives thinking they will gain something from heaven after death), not babble about love, religion, and reform.

The present age is as immoral as any past age ; on the other hand it is as moral. No nation ever existed that was blessed as our own is. Why then complain. We cannot afford reform, it is too expensive. The civil war was too expensive, though the cause was good. The war that freed Cuba contained a just cause until it was converted into a conquest, the principles on which our nation is founded turned aside, and hustled by the aid of the Monroe Doctrine which acted as a pontoon bridge thousands of miles beyond the sea, where the great Monroe said we had no business. The bridge, which was not too elastic, became strained and ultimately shattered, and sank in the waves. We are marooned there now, with nothing to crawl back on. Governments make mistakes and lie and cheat the same as individuals do and

should be censured when they become hypocritical. We are in dearth of a statesman in our congress, a Daniel Webster, and we haven't one; a man of ability, who can do business with nations and with the people of his own country and avert war and horror and mix-ups in China and tyranny in the Philipines if possible, and expose the silly doctrines of demagogues who try to delude the people, even of America, with a fairy tale of free money or with awful pictures of a king and a tyrannical despotism. We are as destitute of a statesman as we are of a literary man. The French Revolution was a panorama of the most intense human horror, which culminated in the worship of one single man of gigantic vanity (which, by the way, is the correct and only definition of fame or glory), who strewed the earth with enough "hostile bones" to insure the reign of liberty over the entire universe for thousands of years. The result *was* a little liberty, but even now there is a prospect of the return of the Bourbons to power, and the French government is as corrupt as the American (the general government is meant) and the French people are as corrupt as the American people.

The birth of Christ was the most lamentable event that ever occurred in human history. The most horrible conflicts recorded in the annals of nations were due to Christianity, or the abuse of the same. St. Bartholomews, the Crusades, and the centuries of unceasing wars in every European nation, and some Asiatic, were conflicts between Christians, and what did all this chaos give us? Ten thousand creeds as unreasonable to a man possessed of common sense as the myths of Greece and Rome are to the world to-day. The Bible, with the New Testament omitted, is the most profane and ungodly book that was ever given to man, a record of chaos, wars, murders, and other crimes, which will not be mentioned here, in which the liar and the cheat came out victorious in most cases, while crimes that would shame a fiend are attributed to a so-called just and merciful God. Does anyone wonder that the word idiocy has been used here? This book should not be allowed in the family, the church or the government. What has been said has not been said because I am bold, or because I think I know more than others, but is merely an expression of extreme disgust and a struggle between

common sense on my part and of idiocy on the part of the persons or institutions named or referred to, both in this preface and in the poem, and very little of what has been said will be changed, no matter if some may protest.

One gentleman to whom I have alluded (a rather distinguished person in his line) may, if he sees this, which is highly improbable, think me unappreciative of a slight favor he did me once upon a time. If such is the case I will surely try to atone for the crime or at least sue for pardon.

Should this production be noticed by the "literary world" or "critics" and receive any abuse whatever I hold in reserve some very appropriate reasons to advance in my own defense, or I may in a real short time produce another poem "breathing" defiance. Should anyone attempt by the aid of law to obtain retribution, they will not only show their weakness and folly but will also cause me an unlimited amount of trouble, and perhaps expense, so I would say to those who contemplate such a thing in the heat of their anger to please, please refrain. I assume all responsibility however for what has been said, the publishers having condescended to

"soil the press" merely as a matter of business. No one ever saw this poem except the printers and myself.

A. Clark.

WHEN BARDS SING OUT OF TUNE.

'Tis said ere now the pen with good intent
In mighty hands bold darts of satire sent
O'er fields where trampling feet rare flowers crushed,
And panic stirred where'er the missiles rushed.
Yet when the field was cleared—the weaklings fled—
Rare sunshine o'er the misused region spread;
Thus with the foe, the world and time could cope
Great names as Butler, Goldsmith, Byron, Pope.
Immortal songs from these illustrious men
Flowed o'er the world to melt the gloom again.

By genius e'en our earthly sphere was blessed
Nor by pretenders' scribblings still distressed,
Yet Science soon assumed imperial sway
Whose power has swept the tide of song
away,
Or in the shadow of the mistress died
The flowers that feared to flourish by her
side.
While notes of masters echoed faint—anon
Were swept away into oblivion.
Yet wherefore mourn the loss of such as
these
When simpler strains of senseless song can
please?
Why mourn the muse's death within a time
When Amazons reign o'er the realms of
rhyme?
No lovely queens with thoughtful souls
serene
Can now preside, times blessed by such have
been.
To 'scape such sights, the muses spread their
wings—
Disgusted soar o'er these unholy things.

Thus one must judge who haply glanced
around
And bold faced tyrants through the regions
found.
Rank weeds have grown and none remain
to mow
The spreading plague that flowers again
may grow.
Thus like the earth in antediluvian days
A sight unholy greets the heavenly gaze.
Nor, in these blighted days could one expect
A noble thought in lovely language decked.
All are so low in intellect and skill
No power appears, yet children scribble still.
O Christ! what mental freaks exist at times
To torture man with silly prose and rhymes!

What magazines of witless "cleverness"
The listening ear of earth with rot distress!
Would Mozart bow to coon song writers
now?
To Kipling shall the English poets bow?
Yet when such thus the sacred muse profane
From protest why should all so long refrain?

Though Mammon rears his palace o'er our
sphere
With rule despotic—field for mastery clear—
Though minds of genius e'en abandon art
Why view unmoved the banished train de-
part?
Though tyrants stir with wretched state-
ments noise
Like honored Poe's superior Colonel Joyce—

Not all are thus, the curse not all shall bear
Nor insult cast, like Joyce, at genius rare.
This gifted man yields us his volume vile
O'er which satanic souls might deign to
smile,
Yet sense revolts and taste in anger leaps
That such a soul in realms of revery sleeps.
But thanks to sense we're awed by few like
this,
Yet many another too has gone amiss—
Yes, there are others, simple, hopeful, sweet,
Who figures trace o'er many a startled
sheet—
Forever toiling—genius urging on—

Though doubt may flutter near, 'tis quickly
gone.
The press, the pulpit, stage, society,
All join the band—search for God's store-
house "Key."
'Tis right to write, but why not right the
wrong,
Purge earth of this degenerate prose and
song?
Ah such a state might well make mortals
sick;
Yet, dear machine, along thy labor click.

Who would have reared o'er Delphi's sacred
shrine
To Phœbus, god of sunlight and divine,
In ancient days, a hut of mud and called
The thing a temple grand and marble
walled?
Who then would placed within this vault
profane
Clay images of gods and heroes slain
With worship feigned to these immortal
ones

Who glorious shone earth's deities and sons ?
The altar who would set with Jewish beads
For jewels symbols of these heroes' deeds ?
What scribes and scribblers would have then rehearsed
In doggerel lines of rhyme and blank the worst,
The annals of the Grecian bright and brave,—
Cast insults and not luster o'er his grave ?
Who would have done such things as these ? The low
Like Goths who pillaged Rome an age ago.
But never sacrilege like this occurred
In those old days of which we oft have heard.
O'er Delphi rose in reverence to the gods
A massive structure, not a pile of sods,
And marble glistened 'neath the sacred sun
As o'er his shrine the glittering car was run,
While gifted masters skilled in various arts
Poured splendor o'er the deities of their hearts.
Yet now it seems our shrine of Literature
Is built of stuff which shall not long endure ;

Weak proselytes of low, inferior creeds
Swarm o'er the altars of apostate breeds ;
Would-be artistic souls, all talentless,
Within each niche of Glory's temple press,
While in the portals eager crowds behold
The glaring spots which have not yet been sold.
For all must know that in this Golden Age
For lucre names are scrawled on Honor's page.
Thus crowded in our numerous magazines
In mammoth type stand notices of scenes
That startle one as midnight phantoms might,
Or dreams of thugs which chill the soul with fright,
Or tender tales by social lions wrote,
With scenes in mansions laid or yachts afloat,
Yet on the title page of some reviews
The printer's name 'neath language to enthuse
The passer-by speaks out in daubs of ink
That of the contents one might wistful think.
Yet purchased once that which within you find

Are serial stories of the plotless kind.
Or smaller gems of love's most singular passion,
Or seaside episodes with men of fashion,
Or Grace's sweetheart, painter, millionaire,
Or novelist, who's got or not got there;
And congressmen and senators galore
Whose brains (and wealth) would fill a reservoir;
Or patriotic, glowing, glorious scenes
Of soldier-life o'er in the Philippines—
How noble Clarence on his death-bed gave,—
E'er being lowered in his soldier's grave—
This, that and t'other sad confused advice
Unto his comrade for his lady nice;
Or of romances round in regions swell,
Where men are counts—each maid with coin a belle.
Such thrilling tales with power are daily penned—
Portrayed in type for which small sums we spend.
While here and there all o'er the glorious land

Tag dull disciples of the eager band—
Full-fledgéd censors right from district school,
Ambitious country lads who learned by rule—
Who strolled to town—began by throwing paste,
But later climbed into the chair of Taste—
Praise famous authors powerful and great
(But amateurs must bear these urchins' hate)
Pick figures here and there like scratching hens—
Drink Inspiration, ply their fluent pens
Tell all the merit of the mighty things,
Praise villains even or give ladies wings,
Till one would judge our authors had no faults,
That shuffling scribes tread life with airy waltz.
Such are we now, all reason cast behind,
Weak-minded authors prate to grand mankind.

Byron, thou shouldst be living at this time,

Earth hath much need of thee and of thy rhyme.*
Thine was the power, thine the mighty soul,
O'er which not centuries e'en shall hold control.
Thine was the force that trod the pigmies down,
That "poured a flood of rhyme along the town."
Thine was the skill of satire linked with might
Which killed the weak or raised them into light.
Alas that none with half thy genius lives,
That all give words but no one glory gives.
Yet o'er this page my feeble muse will trace
A silly thing to bring perhaps disgrace.
And Pope has lived a life of long disease,
Yet flowers around cast perfume on the breeze.
But now the world of letters blighted is
Gone to decay—a sickness worse than his.

* "Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour, England hath need of thee."—WORDSWORTH.

For thought and beauty from his musings
sprung—
Then earth applauded strains which masters
sung.
Not now a flower o'er the desert blooms,
Some get, but should not, Honor's lying
tombs.
Not that I seek to shine as others shone,
Since might's not mine I rather be unknown.
Better to be a self-respecting thing
Than to, for tips, to bands of fakirs cling.

We all have heard that Midas won mule's
ears,
But shall we deem that through these later
years
The tortured world has been and is the same
And yields to ugly Pan not Phoebus fame?
Nay, say not so, for those have been forgot
Who fain would write, and old earth cast her
lot
In other ways, and lo, the grand advance
On reason she relies--not fickle chance.
Yet simple souls stake everything for fame,

All that the proud world owes them is a name.
And "fools rush in where angels fear to tread,"
Cheat living mortals, spurn the gifted dead.
While souls love-sickened cram the daily press
With little gems on family happiness—
And tell poor orphans, widows and the like
To stick to Bill or to abandon Mike;
To let the dead man slumber in his grave—
Clasp this beau in the arms and be his slave—
To let the kisses sizzle on his mouth—
For widows, oft get parched from endless drouth.
But did they place advice in decent rhyme,
This sweet reform against connubial crime
Might then assume the hues of poisonous weeds—
Be fair to view, though dangerous still the seeds.
What do they know of matrimony? They
No doubt have been there in their little day;

So others have, but who in heaven, or hell,
Or earth the path to happiness shall tell?
A million wives have had a million men—
(A million more no doubt will have again).
But who shall tell we lovers what to do
Unless we hear what all already knew?
O give a rest, O let us rest in peace,
Let all this philosophic jargon cease.
Ambrosial food of love one cares not for
Since such is not and never was of yore.
A little sense instead we would prefer,
Not plans to catch or dodge or him or her.
E'en literature might make a nation great
As naval heroes, yet we still await
And listen in the calm suspense to this—
These treatises on matrimonial bliss.
But all have got the "true-born poet's soul,"
Whose flight to heaven no mortal things control;
On airy wing they sweep the heavenly spheres,
Tell what they saw of truth and draw our tears.
All list to music in the moaning wind,

All beauty in the scenes of nature find.
But strange it is there springs from such as
those
Mere reference to such things in ignorant
prose.

But, lo, the poet in his magic cell :—
O'er every form of verse he scratches well.
Yet since his rhymes were oft considered
rank,
He copies Shakspeare and descends to blank.
He ploddeth on—Rhyme's shattered palace
knocks
Away and drives along the site an ox.
Bent o'er a highly polished desk he draws
A monstrous figure—and cheap men's ap-
plause.
A homely metaphor besmeared with ink
He scrawls in revery, for he scarce can think.
'Tis easy, true, o'er earth to scatter rhyme—
To speak of heathens in a heathen clime—
To chant of Hindoos or of staler things,
And weave in that which awe from Ignorance
brings ;

To prove a negro and a cow the same,
And win by freakish figures fleeting fame.
But 'twould be rather difficult, I ween,
To draw as Homer did an epic scene—
To speak of Afric as he did of Troy—
'Twould take a man I think—no scribbling boy.
But list', here rises one with promise sweet,
Another Milton presently we'll greet,
It is an echo from the days that were,
E'en now his style recalls good Whittier;
Disturb him not but let his infant muse
Sleep, calmly dwelling on the various hues
Of lovely language, or behold the scenes
Of beauty here or in the Philippines;
There, rests a field for some gigantic mind—
There too live apes much like our rhyming kind,
In sooth they seem of very similar breed,
Whose tuneful chatter we enraptured heed.
'Tis Kipling tells us of the apes from which
Great Darwin dreams we sprung, so in a niche
Of fame at least will one descendant shine,

But heaven forbid that still we hear him whine,
What noise would echo through the hall of fame,
What flowers would Shoot around the gifted Game!
O Kipling, worshiped idol of the set,*
You nobly spoke to say, "Lest we forget,"
For now it seems too much has been forgot.
Yet pity we those who forget *thee* not.
Remember, though, thy "White Man's Burden," Rud,
And load him lightly plodding through this mud.
Again, O Ajax, call on Jove for light

* Kipling's verse at least displays no more ability than an ordinary schoolboy's scribblings would should he attempt poetry, and it would be as absurd to compare him with even Chatterton or Henry White who died when they were mere boys and whose works are masterpieces showing the most precocious geniuses that we find in literature, as it would be to compare a popular song-writer with Wagner. Mr. Kipling has never chosen a beautiful or poetical subject, nor has he ever written a beautiful passage of verse.

To melt this plague, this darkness, from our sight.
Ah, would it not be pleasant once to hear
A nightingale with voice divinely clear?
Would then these bard apes chatter still, or pause,
Or skulk into the swamps, or give applause?
Of the effect we only can surmise—
But not too soon a voice like this will rise
Triumphant o'er the dark polluted air,
To view the scene would be to view despair.
'Twere easier far for fiends to angels be
Or for a Nymph to seek Proserpina.
But let them scrawl, poor, feeble, toiling things,
Promise at least Elysian Fields and wings,—
'Twill cheer them through this awful world of ours,
All children should have praises—later flowers.

'Tis said the Harpies, hideous hungry cranes,
Of whose existence still the myth remains,

Tormented Phineus, blind, and snatched his food,
So now our critics of that hungry brood
Snatch every promise from a soul serene
And praise a friend ignobly low and mean,
As though they deemed one friendless and alone
A base intruder in their dwarfish zone.
Who can advance if learned imbeciles
Give idiots praise—presumptuous children smiles?
But there may rise a haughtier one some day,
Ignoring all and hold the beasts at bay.
Why urge not scribes who do no good nor harm
That fame upon our nation spread her charm?
In such an age o'ershadowed so with schemes
O'er earth will Poesy cast no splendid beams?
To thus be fettered give ye one excuse,
Shall none a volume readable produce?
"What have we ever done to bear this grudge,"

In dearth of light shall we be choked with
smudge?
All that we chance to read appears insane
Penned by such "wits" as our revered Mark
Twain,
Thus when this ever-pleasing merry one
Upon a pure religion pours his fun;
Harmless, perhaps, but doubly low in that,
By grinning friends afraid not of combat,
Supported, he, rules, lion of the day,
To such as these we now must homage pay.

Is there no wit, no force, no revery,
To stir an age when thought to act is free?
Is there no taste, no eloquence, no strength
To urge the muse to yield us power at
length?
Bards are not born, they represent the
times,
Display the people's thoughts in various
rhymes.
Thus ere the war that made the negro free
(And orators of high and low degree)
We find a school of wondrous moral men

A nation firing with the "flame-dipped" pen.*
Some deem that they alone have done the work,
Like Grecian Fire once subdued the Turk.
Some, too, proclaim that Voltaire and Rousseau
O'er France once cast the thundrous clouds of woe.
This may be truth, but what a lovely thing
It were if they on history glance then sing
In verses meterless of honored men
Who stirred the world to terror now and then.
The Bourbon despot and the master gave
The cause that freed the Frenchman and the slave.
While those who snatched the chance rushed in in time

* I wonder whether the negroes would prefer to work for masters obtaining the "necessities of life," and being used in most cases with kindness, receiving a little punishment now and then, such as a whipping, or to be "free" and burned at the stake by we "patriots" and "lovers of justice." I do not know.

To strew the earth with seeds that blossomed
Crime.
But why now shout to laborers anarchy?
Is not this nation glorious still and free?
Why then pollute the spirit of the day—
Urge foreigners to snatch our wealth away?
Have we not now what France with terror
bought?
Has history not through bloody annals
taught
The gloom of war, ambition, envy, and
The false desire that our wealth expand?
Who doth it harm if able men extract
A little gold from some neglected tract?
What harm if rich men's cattle roam the
plain;
Their floating mansions plow the watery
plain?
If they for you and I railroads construct—
Span stream and vale with steel and via-
duct?
Build mammoth engines wrought of worth-
less steel,
Gigantic plans for future growth reveal—

Win forty millions on the board of trade—
If they our rights respected—laws obeyed?
And forty thousand souls who dreamed of wealth,
Who sought to clasp it quickly and by stealth,
Late saw their visions melt—hope changed to hate,
Those who were sanguine wander desolate.
All live alike, all earthly treasure seek—
And avarice conquers strong—makes wild the weak.
Our daily riots illustrate the truth,
And seeds uncouth breed principles uncouth.
No matter what their wage, if great or small,
By Mammon and by Gain are governed all.
They all complain, fight for a little more,
Then curse the men they should be thankful for.
Are we not all to build a fortune free?
Alas, we lack the tool—Ability.
Yet do they cry, "They stole our chance from us

'Tis they alone who made us lowly thus."
Unhappy, jealous, discontented, sad,
They seek lost blessings which they never had,
Then say not that if one would scribble well
His song and thought on tyranny must dwell.
The cause is false, such evil spirits grim.
Though gentle rains may make the river brim
With torrents gushing onward to the main,
Who would behold the heavens dark again,
Or wish that vapors gather o'er the sky
Whence lightnings strong would flash through realms on high,
Foreboding tempests direful and strong?
Should such as these win praises for their song?
Nay, rather check the fleecy threatening cloud
Or spurn the jerky medley of the proud.

But college pedants, who would startle earth,
Proclaim the rich and learned of equal worth.
Shakspeare descendeth from his lofty reign

To join the greedy worshipers of Gain.
As though a man who stumbled into oil,
Or found a gold mine in his arid soil,
With genius e'en produced the treasure rare
That gives him luxury and luscious fare.
But here's another adept of the school
Who never kissed a woman—lucky fool.
But who can blame him, here's a happy chance
To cast his name to us and jolly France;
For over there an old boy, such as he,
Is little short of a monstrosity.
But once he shone there, so the gay girls say,
He even kissed them on a thoughtless day.
But who should care if these immortal men
Say this, or that, and say it o'er again?
Why should a noble face adorn the press
With girls who won the modest one's caress?
We know not why, but of one fact are sure—
The fast decline of sense and literature.
We, too, conclude these pedagogues are daft
To laugh at things at which, ere this, none laughed.
Now, juvenile professors, cease this noise

'Tis impolite, and naughty, lovely boys.
You may raise mortal angels to the skies
But scarce can drag immortals down with lies.*
But I may wander from my theme and yet
These interesting lads are in the set.
O philanthropic souls, an author's pound
Would be a happy institute to found,
To run the strayed or lost into at times,
Or plagiarists who pirate modern rhymes.
'Twould set the world from these mauraders free.
But trouble is so irrevocably
The lower breeds and higher, too, have lost
Their way that such would court tremendous cost.
And there exist few masters who could judge
The lost from others and could bear their grudge.
Nay 'twould not do, yet might the drove be taxed,

"He raised a mortal to the skies
She drew an angel down."
—DRYDEN.

(Thus do by them as they have done,) relaxed
Might then the strain upon our reason be
For scores of head would break the law and
flee.

Grand editors your judging crew discharge,*
Small brains compose it though their pay is
large.
Ye who stand great in bribes and politics
A moment pause—a broken idol fix ;
Cease once to plan for perquisites and fame,
Do one good act, then genuine honor claim.
For in your shelter rests a crazy crowd
Who nought possess but royal live and proud.
The great who even in our nation dwelt
The insults of this motley crew have felt.
Thus, Poe, whose muse attempted once to soar

*This refers of course to the so-called "critics" on the city and village newspapers. One declares that a certain production is a masterpiece, another that it was not worth while and gives a few lines written by a prominent one of the modern multitude as a pattern for a young and unsophisticated writer who has not yet got on to the ways of the world, or composes a little gem extempore for the occasion.

To heights which none since reached, and, none before,
Is now recalled as drunken or insane.
(Thus well might shine amongst the modern train)
Our greatest bard, an outcast and a sot,
With name disgraced and lofty works forgot,
All dead and powerless his place resigns
To moral men, with good but feeble lines.
And halls of honor for this goodness give
Places meant for great not those who virtuous live.
Let soon the sunshine melt this gloom away,
And Justice hold again her rightful sway.
Let fame deserved be yielded as before
Misjudgment and injustice "nevermore."

Shall simple critics form a feeble school
Which wanders far from high poetic rule?
And strive to bring each soaring spirit down—
In din the borrowed strains of power drown?
Or urge that children infants imitate
Whose faint attempts are vague and desolate?

Who now would wish amongst the set to shine
(E'en though they win applause) doomed to decline ?
What stale advice they cast unto them now,
To judge or to produce they know not how.
E'en those most honored bear the rabble's hate
And ruffians scoff at Britain's laureate.

But e'en a Plato rises now and then
Whose thoughts flow down his philosophic pen,
A Socrates whose giant thinker thinks
But muddled due to volumes mixed and drinks.
Within his editorial room he looks
Upon the titles of a hundred books
On every subject heard or not heard of
From Eden's site 'way down to modern love.
Then, seeking for a refuge, views the skies
Imagines that 'twould pleasant be to rise
Above this intellectual labor and
Unto the breezes let his wings expand.

A happy thought—he'll benefit mankind—
'Twere crime that mortals be in doubt and blind.
Then flows this "masterpiece of human thought"
From inspiration and from heaven caught,
Proclaiming heaven somewhere beyond the sun *
Where some will float when woes of life are done.
Is this not intellect? Diogenes
Did thy tub drift through smooth aerial seas?
Perhaps this master thus will float some day
Unto his heaven in the Milky Way.
Diogenes come back and trim thy lamp,
In quest of *man* round thy old planet tramp.

Not long ago under the head "Masterpieces of Hmuan Thought" appeared an article by someone (I know not who nor care) declaring that heaven must be somewhere in the sky. A man who will express such ignorant, idiotic ideas to the people of an enlightened age, I care not who he is, whether a college pedagogue or a venerable preacher, ought to be ridiculed. One finds that imbecility exists amongst the "intellectual" classes as in the lower breeds of humanity, but they're all the same to me although I'm not much of anybody myself.

But such ideas pass for "thought" these days,
Win great applause, and childish preachers
praise.

But still one more attempts another line
Far more than mortal yet not quite divine,
With firm belief in human destiny,—
In God and man himself and idiocy,—
Displays a hundred metaphors or so—
Tracks back a principle whereby to show
That J. P. Morgan is a child of years
By fortune reared but now denounced with
fears ;
Explains why labor, wealth, this and that
thing
Such misery to a grand republic bring.
That if a thousand men are millionaires
Contempt the nation of this coterie bears—
Shows how the congress (great, yet power-
less)
Linked with these monarchs brought us all
distress.
In short attempts to solve these problems
that

He thinks will ultimately cause combat.
So will they, doubt it not, if such as these,
To discord stir, shout ruin to the breeze.
Poor bigot, why not leave these mounts alone
Not strive to move them, try at first a stone
And move thyself from Babel's noisy tower?
The power denied to all is not thy power.
We heard the loud result of such a voice
But just a few brief years ago when noise,
Inspiring noise, flowed free from "silvery tongues"
But reason—if such was—dropped in the lungs.
Yes, we have heard a mighty man like this
A nation picture filled with wealth and bliss
Where magic engines rock or cinders fed
Bright glittering showers o'er the country spread.
But Truth, dove-winged, came flitting o'er the scene
Spread quiet in her path—the dream had been.
But lo, the tyrant rose again and spoke
Of tragedy that startling fears awoke—

While eastern gamblers chimed into the din,
Feigned good to do with money, lies and sin ;
Told that a monarch soon would rear his throne
And self-crowned rule the land subdued alone.
But tigers oft may vicious be and growl
Or strike with terror those who hear them howl ;
Yet when the gentler jungle voices speak,
They skulk away and newer pastures seek.
O shade of empire, cast thy form away
Thy melancholy cloud but shields decay,
Not o'er republics, principles, and all
That man hath blessed, thy sable robes shall fall.
No golden crown, no scepter still shall bear
Away the truths that lands in freedom share.
Though tyrants howl and worshipers of Gain
Escort calamity not in their train
Shall souls deluded tramp—no banners stream

Fair emblems of the knaves' ungodly dream.
But Liberty, sweet sovereign of the realm,*
Will spread her wings and loiter o'er our helm.
Away, thou specter, lower not thy shades
Nor spirit that a freeborn race degrades.
Though empires fall beneath the spoiler's hand,
Though nations o'er dead empires' sites expand,
Not all shall fall; then cease, ye mindless knaves,
Behold the bloodstains on your fathers' graves
And cry no more—in freedom be content—
Not yet for nought the land's young life was spent.
Behold the war-god on his mountain throne—
With scarlet scepter—view the gory field!
His oozing mantle o'er a heart of stone—
His glittering eye gloats o'er the sight revealed

* The reader is requested to consider the "realm" that of the goddess Liberty, as a republic of course is not a realm.

While wild-eyed Riot o'er his glistening
shield
Pours beams of fire that melt not his soul,
For, in the flame that rages, lie concealed
The passions of the giant that control
The iron gates that close round Glory's
scroll.*
Shall then that won by war be swept away,
Shall patriots' treasures wither and decay?
Nay, heed the annals written on Time's
wheel
Whose moments clang when nations are at
strife
Behold, earth's record chiseled in the steel
Whereon is pictured agony of life,
Nor be aroused by demagogue's false tongue,
To such, O let no pæan still be sung.

* These few lines which appear somewhat irregular in rhyme are merely an excerpt of a poem written not long ago by myself in what poets used to call the Spenserian stanza, it being originated by Edmund Spenser. It is considered one of the most difficult—in fact the most difficult—forms of versification and for this reason has never been used by modern writers. I trust the above irregularity will be excused.

O tower of Babel, reared unto the skies,
From out thy galleries wild the rabble cries,
Whose echoing sounds o'er truth ascending
call,
Float boisterous on, grow faint, expire and
fall.
O blended voices of chaotic souls
Whose ribaldry along the century rolls,
Be there one sunbeam streaming o'er the
mass,
One ray of truth? Of reason? None, alas!
What worshipers will hail them o'er the
line?
Will sons more skilled deem noise like this
divine?
Fear not posterity, thou shalt not know
The creaking essence of our bliss or woe.
For fame, ere then, will cast the frail aside
Whose power was spent in one unnatural
stride.
Abusers all of art and intellect
Who little do, but great applause expect.
Ungodly vandals who our treasuries sack
Who will atone—who call the exiled back?

Ye who would form of mire a marble pile,
Make Venus rave or cold Medusa smile,
Ye who usurp the poet's sacred realm—
With ill-rhymed verse the gentle overwhelm ;
Who flood the market with a wild deluge
For soothing balm of mud or vermifuge—
Who sing of love (a monster now we judge
'Gainst whom all learned and unlearned hold
their grudge)
Who flowers address like Scotland's gifted
Burns
(He though was rather skillful in such
turns,)
Who speak of past, philosophize on life,
Tell who to choose for husband, or for wife,
O ye who rack your brains for theories new,
Inspiring scandals, feigning good to do—
Cease, let us rest or for a change prepare,
For strains like these upon the feelings tear.
Inscribe your musings on your study walls
Or let them float along Oblivion's halls,
Nor tragic make a silly comedy ;
Abandon all—set crowds deluded free.
Great authors' portraits dangle everywhere,

Bald-headed some—some looks of greatness
wear.
But some e'en blessed with hair ne'er felt a
comb,
'Tis ruffled like the plot that plods their tome.
Let queer Mark Twain and Paderewski thus
Spread their strange personalities to us,
They may afford to thus eccentric be
But let not all court Eccentricity.
The stuff they mold possesses quite enough.
Would ye be queer? Then cease to make
the stuff.
O lovely tales that greet our eager eyes,
From Hades scenes, and pictures from the
skies.
Each family yields its votary to the set,
Except my own which somber failure met.
And manuscripts by carload yearly pour
On printers' desks whose giant presses roar.
But when a youth, e'en friendless and alone,
Before some bloated devil stands, his tone
Persuasive and his feelings filled with fears,
Who hopes for joy in some succeeding years
The busy mortal bids him take a seat

That later he his business may repeat.
Then looking o'er the schoolboy stuff he grins—
Says later oft one smiles of fortune wins.
Tells of a friend out in the suburbs where
You might admitted be, but over there
Lives one, the greatest of the great, who tells
In just what sphere a bard or idiot dwells.
But should you say you never heard of him
This Cerberus who rots in regions grim
Proclaims it strange since such a power was his
Few knew it and his friend offended is.
Thus lies the field o'er which the tyrants roam
Intruders all who make the land their home,
Tramp o'er the flowery graves of gifted men—
O Truth, assert thy rights and reign again.

Fair Athens, Alexandria and Rome—
Once famed for learning—each the poet's home—

Though flame and war your archives have subdued
'Tis good your books ere this have been reviewed.
What would they win in these degraded days?
A passing look, contempt, but nay, no praise.
But even yet some recollect the times
When Ptolemy gathered books and Hellas rhymes.
Still to those times with longing looks we gaze
When classic bards made pleasant classic days.
Whose music swells through centuries and again
Great Rome sang sweetly through Augustus' reign.
And what, deemed Time, should be these poems' worth?
Immortal places o'er the realms of earth.
No laurel wreaths are twined for worthies now

But such may deck a plodding author's brow;
Like those of old ; no harps these days are
swept,
But would-be wonders unto fame have crept.

Reporters, women, schoolboys, everyone
The little race along the pathway run,
Write naval histories, novels, essays, verse.
Some soar to heaven but none would ride
the hearse.
And o'er the crowded path these days are
strewn
Flowers meant for great but snatched by
every loon.
In New York east and on to 'Frisco west
These scribes relieve their minds with
thought distressed.
Pour o'er each page besmeared with bluish
ink
More plans and thoughts than fools con-
firmed could think.
Tell judges, senators and all frail men
Just what to do to honor win again.
Or argue for the laboring class and tell

Of joys in which they ne'er did but should
dwell.
We late have seen a pander of the crew
A childish act of low injustice do,
And cast a slur upon a noble man
That he might form another sluggish clan.
May worms consume this viper's dirty work,
Let not the land o'er such a falsehood smirk.

Great "yearly books" upon the counters
lie
Whose silly titles with each other vie,
A "modest" title decks some volumes new
O yes, quite modest and with reason too.
But e'en a name laconic as can be
But flattery casts o'er what within you see.
Philosophy, biography,—what not ?
Confused run through a labyrinthian plot ;
Advice to statesmen, nations e'en, and cooks;
Historic ravings ; histrionic books—
"Beast-tales" (but, Heavens ! why not speak
of themselves—
Or claw their nightmares off the bookman's
shelves ?) ;

All hint of knowledge ; problems solve of
fate,
All jostle on with ever hustling gait.
All praise each other—of one school are all;
Some rise o'er others—none inglorious fall.
Poor weakly scribes whose volumes weakly
bind
Thoughts by the bundle from each mon-
strous mind.
Though once the wise said, "Nothing can
be known,"
Truth's been surpassed—usurped has been
her throne.

O feeble fools who foil the smiles of Fame
Which beams on all since all are in the
game.
Not now in sunny realms the muses bask,
And lowered Glory gives to all who ask.
The poets' reign is crushed—their laurels
fade ;
Their stolen thoughts in rags appear ar-
rayed.

And poets' rank if we believe reviews *
Is judged by ways of life, not by the muse.

Sad mutilated figures of the great
To tatters torn by ruffian hands of hate—
All stanzas loved and gently used of old
So tortured are by heathens proudly bold.
Who shame the strong, the gentle ones annoy,
And all that's fair with poisonous taint destroy.
Shall none protest? Shall none with power proclaim
These base marauders vandal thieves of fame?
Shall all be calm, this sacrilege applaud?
Be pleased by wit—by tragedy o'erawed?

* In a cheap magazine not long ago appeared the statement that some people still admire Byron and take a delight in reading him on account of his ways of life; as though he is not one of the literary prodigies of all ages. No one appreciates such ability until they understand poetry, for the mere writing of verses is that which any one can accomplish and a poet produces them with an ease and a rapidity that would seem incredible to those who erroneously believe poetry to be a difficult art.

Yet say not all are happily thus bereft
Of things admired whose names alone are left.
Say not that all contented thus shall be
With ugly minds who caused the muse flee—
Still some will gaze unto a future year
When all the nine in triumph will appear.

Sweet sonnets breathing eloquence and peace
A column in all published pamphlets lease,
While at the top or 'neath the fourteenth line
The bard, who like his verse would be divine,
Has stamped his name, 'tis proper to be sure,
But far more proper were it still obscure.
O sonnets, sweet companions of my youth,
The way I used thy stanzas seemed uncouth,
Two score a day—but then I was in love
And soaring to the amorous heights above.
But in such space religious thought to twine
Was not my gift—I never was divine.
But this dear author, Christian like and chaste,

Shall not on love his God-given talent waste.
His lyre will whisper to the saintly air
The strains that shame the low and debonair.
I know not this particular master's name,
But calm it nestles in our modern fame.
Unjust perhaps it is to speak this way,
But what's religion in this present day?
Ten thousand preachers, learned hypocrites,
Whose blasphemy blackwinged around us flits,
To their parishioners cry this and that—
With western judges join in fierce combat,
Yet trapped—they tremble in their sacred knees,
To prison shun do all that law may please.
All claim Christ's power—preach—but who could not?
But now it seems Christ's healing power's forgot.
E'en when another creed mysterious
With good intent claims that 'twill aid us thus
Is spread before the thinking masses, then
Anathemas flow from these moral men.

From every pulpit as from Satans comes
The black abuse of these renowned Tom Thumbs.
Vituperate our noblest human powers—
(The newer faith their congregation lowers)
What one of them e'er did what Christ hath told?
Who heals the sick as Christians did of old?
Who ever raised a dead man? See they not
The infamy of this celestial rot?
While in our great metropolis down east
One says 'tis well that fashion drink and feast
Since those disposed to do those things are in
His wealthy parish and his realm of sin.
O babbling preachers—slanderers of Christ
By gaiety to Satan's realm enticed,
Wherefore degrade the sacred name of saint
The altars of the Christ with evil taint?
What will reward such men beyond the grave?

Who lose the souls their duty 'tis to save? *
O Carnegie! illustrious Scottish chief!
Who givest us books and famished souls
relief.
Thou lucky mortal! Cæsar of the land!
Erecting piles that shall forever stand—
Immortal Cheops! where will Egypt be
Ten centuries hence when "Good King
Carnegie"
Will be inscribed in ancient annals? Then
You'll shine amongst your noble brother
men.
Then Egypt will no longer boast her Sphinx
(Another's there who of the future thinks).
Then over in South Africa perhaps,
A place renowned for Boer and British traps,

* No apology whatever is offered for this blasphemy, more than to say that those who read may judge for themselves whether it is right or wrong. This profession is the weakest and most useless of modern times except the medical profession which cannot cure one fatal disease that ever afflicted the human race, and it would be a blessing to humanity if all of their "theories," their quackery and their medicine would be given to destruction. There is as good a field for the satirist in either of these professions as in my feeble literary world.

Amid the relics of a land decayed
A mummy or some bones will be displayed
And all will know the "builder of the tombs,"
Whose work the annals of his land illumes.
Then they'll relate the tale of many a "deal,"
And guides proclaim," It is the man of steel ! *
Yet still, grand man, you could a wonder do,
Another honor win e'er life is through,
A kindergarten found for bookish folks
Where they may study tragedy and jokes—
Laws of divorce—the principles of love—
Just where our heaven's site is up above—
On labor ponder—trusts and kindred things—

* This fickle rhyme does not express the author's opinion of Mr. Carnegie at all. In fact it is quite the opposite, as this gentleman has appropriated his private fortune voluntarily to the betterment of the world and should be honored and respected for his good work. Those who look at his acts in the light in which the verse places them are certainly vain and narrow-minded and unjust, and even were the motive as represented there it could not destroy the goodness derived from it, as all men wish to be remembered for good acts and by their countrymen and have a perfect right to attempt to attain their respect. But Carnegie is such a generous mortal that thinking of his good acts gives one an "inspiration."

Prognosis try—since we're exposed to Kings.
The laws of criticism study deep—
An eye on romance of all species keep—
Learn how to tell of duchesses and dukes,
Of gallant knights, sweet heiresses and spooks—
Learn how to weave some French expression in—
(Already though they've that pedantic sin)—
Work "problems" out in words not 'rithmetic
But bare of fruit as deserts Arabic.
And have connected too a dormitory
Where some may slumber, dream and mold a story,
Or give the dull ones lamps and peanut oil—
Extract of poppy show them how to boil,
Thus wrapped in soothing sleep that lulls the soul
Immortal shapes along the mind would roll.
O spectral forms whose shadows flit across
The costly reams bedecked with artful gloss.
Sweet haughty ladies—fairies, graces, elves

Whose only thought's of flattery and themselves.
Or heroes from imaginary wars
Whose flashy clothes before them radiance pours,
Whose manly airs, broad shoulders, and fine looks
Like ghosts of Jasons wander o'er our books.
Undying figures—modern heroes all,
Or Helens who ne'er witnessed Ilium's fall.
Or souls in anguish such as Dante saw
That hold one in infernal spells of awe—

Small vials of deadly poison, suicides—
Unmannered villains snatching dainty brides—
Or some pure preacher who won't bow to love—
Though demons claw within he will not move—
Till passion killed he sweeps along the sky,
To claim his crown in fabled realms on high.
Such tales ill written, "problematic" pour

On printers' desks and flood the bookman's
store.
A hundred thousand such are monthly sold,
For tales like these delight the young and
old.
Old maids and widows, bachelors, reverend
men
Cast toil aside—play havoc with the pen.
Dabble in verse—but say it makes one laugh
What weedy seeds are hidden in this chaff.
Melodious strains like those from southern
seas
Discordant pound for music to the breeze.
Of all the rant, the trash, that one e'er read
By living poets, known, unknown or dead ;
Of all verse revealing minds diseased—
Meant for reform but which not heathens
pleased ;
Of all the thoughts from heaven cast or hell,
These blighted souls in strains of anguish
tell.
Grim death, sweet love—poor Eros—Psyche
too,
Old men who've only yet got death to do—

White monsters, black, and colored if you
choose—
Types of what one will win by death or
lose—
Alike are painted and alike are read—
And monodies and anthems for the dead.
They know all truth, they've fathomed every-
thing;
Know where the Titans writhe—where
seraphs sing.
But I perhaps, so young, should not declare
'Gainst these celebrities. But who would
bear
Tormented thus by stuff e'en bad as mine,
But cast before our eyes and called divine?
Will I be calm and see my favorites cast
Away by this contagious poisonous blast?
I, who have read all through a lonely life
Things that may spread a glory o'er my
strife;
I, who have thought, admired, dreamed of
some
Who whisper still though silent sleep and
dumb,

Shall I behold their wreaths fall into sere,
Praise modern freaks who thus disgrace
them here ?
Have none respect, regard, for marvelous
men ?
Did they but live to toil and die again ?
What were the world if such were cast aside
Would Rome be Rome, Greece Greece and
glorified ?
But down in Indiana—near my home
The jolly Ryley singing's wont to roam,
Though he may pass his wine god Bacchus
by,
Or stumble round awhile with sober Nye,
He soon returns and on the river banks
Returns to heaven for prosperous seasons
thanks.
Or watches turtles drop from off a log.

Or catches thoughts that float around the
bog.
To some of his sweet phrases did I list
(E'en learned some when an elocutionist),
The only reason I recall them thus

Is that I got them mixed with "Spartacus—
Oft' saw the gladiator in my dreams
Stroll by the Wabash, not by Roman streams.
Or saw him shabbily dressed cast lines for fish—
That one would nibble his supremest wish;
Or saw him watching tortoises not Rome
With rotted logs not craters still his home.
Yet be there one amid the modern mob
Deserving of so lucrative a job
I think James Whitcomb really is that one;
Take no offence, old boy, for I mean none.

I now have traced my simple satire through,
'Twas outlined quickly—written quickly too.
In future days, if longer still I live
This act perhaps remorse alone will give.
Yet though some read and may offended be,
'Twill make but little difference now to me.
Tried have I been within my little day,
Yet few have known or cared to make me gay.
Yet unlike others I have deeply thought

Till chaos only lowered which has taught
A strange philosophy—a deep despair—
That so-called mind is little more than air.
And now it seems through countless ages' flight
We gaze alone into a blackened night.
That greater minds than are or e'er will be,
Have flourished 'neath a pagan deity
Whose power now is but a myth, and who
Knows that our creeds are not as truthless too?
Christ healed the sick. Some say "a marvelous thing."
I ask yon painter how he copies spring
Upon a sheet of canvas with such ease—
He says, "Thou could'st do thus if you but please."
I deem the man a fool and stare. Christ said,
"And have ye seen yet none can raise the dead?"
Yet let this pass with but one more remark—
The brain alone yields light, alone brings dark—

And when that little thing is injured, where
Has reason fled? Destroy the brain and there
Is not in reason (Wherefore go beyond?)
A thing of spirit that can e'er respond
To heaven or hell and death by reason shows
Forgetfulness, nor torture nor repose.
And now my task—my pastime rather's o'er—
Hush, my machine—disturb the guests no more.

*This lampoon was composed entirely on a typewriter.

Mortality and immortality are exactly the same things. Death is an event in life. The death of our late President was perhaps the greatest and most impressive event in his life. We remember Abraham Lincoln chiefly by two events: one the emancipation of the slaves, the other his death. The only proof we have of the popular "immortality of the soul" is the simple fact that when we are asleep the mind still acts. So does the heart; but were the heart destroyed there would be no circulation of blood, neither would there be a circulation of thought were the brain or the organ of thought destroyed. A maniac has a diseased or an injured brain, therefore the working of that organ is irregular, producing an irregular circulation of thought. The belief that the earth is flat was all the

L. of C.

rage in Europe and other parts of the world until a mere man came forward and proved the falsity of the belief. Beliefs and faiths are no better than lies. Everything is material. No act ever done by man or God was anything else. The emancipation of the slaves was the freeing them from manual labor and the supposed miseries of such; but to bring this about, one million good and intelligent men were swept from the face of the earth. Love is material. When an object of love is absent or dead there is a craving for its presence. Were the love spiritual there could be no absence. Leave the world and its systems, and its mechanism and its mysteries alone and float on the tide of time. Doing this you will live easy; otherwise you will be dragged along no matter how you attempt to resist. No one ever knew anything but a material world, and no one ever will know anything but a material world because there is no other kind of a world. Every act, thought, and feeling can be traced to a material source. Disease is material, so is health. Spiritual things are absolutely inconceivable. Could they be reached by thought they would be nothingness. Time and eternity are analogous.

APR 7 - 1902

APR 7 1902

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 015 906 307 0